

BLM News

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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LOOTERS VANDALIZE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Elko, Nevada – Looters in search of prehistoric artifacts did extensive damage to a sensitive archaeological site in the Wendover, Nevada area.

Archeologists from the BLM Elko Field Office recently discovered that a valuable prehistoric site had been destroyed earlier this summer.

“The site had a lot of potentially significant information about early man in Nevada,” said Tim Murphy, BLM Elko Archeologist. “Large holes were dug at the site and the material was screened. Burned and unburned bone was thrown around and the remaining artifacts are no longer in context. Archaeological knowledge comes primarily from context – i.e. the physical environment of where and how artifacts are found such as how deep they are and their relation to other artifacts. Without context, very little information can be gained.”

Murphy continued, “Essentially the looters did substantial damage to a potentially nationally significant site. Each site is unique and if it’s destroyed we’ve lost that information forever. These archaeological resources belong to all Americans ... and not in the living room of the people digging them up.”

The vandalism is a crime and is punishable under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. The incident is being investigated from clues left behind by the looters. If people have information about the looting, they’re urged to call BLM Elko Law Enforcement officers at (775) 753-0200 or 753-0306.

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